



Arlington Historic District Commissions Final & Approved Minutes

Date: *November 21, 2019*

Time: *8:00 PM*

Location: *Whittemore Robbins House, 670R Mass. Ave., Arlington MA*

Commissioners *N. Aikenhead, M. Audin, D. Baldwin, C. Barry, M. Bush, C. Hamilton,*
Present: *S. Makowka, C. Tee, J. Worden*

Commissioners *B. Cohen*
Not Present:

Guests: *D. Tee, B. Melofchik, E. Cohen, S. McCabe, L. Dellanno, T. McGough,
M. Wilke, J. Page, J. Hamilton, S. McClelland, C. Royer, E. Kizak,
J. Leone, M. Penzenik, K. Lubar*

1. AHDC Meeting Opens 8:00pm
2. Appointment of alternate Commissioners; Mt. Gilboa – C. Hamilton; Jason/ Gray – M. Bush; Russell District – C. Hamilton; Pleasant St. – C. Barry and C. Hamilton
3. Approval of draft minutes from October 24, 2019. D. Baldwin moved to accept minutes as revised, seconded by C. Barry. Unanimous approval.
4. COMMUNICATIONS

See Attached Email Communications List

a. D. Baldwin said he got monitor appointment at 207 Pleasant Street, he thought someone else was but he will stay as noted on certificate.

b. S. Makowka circulated CPA Grant application to complete inventory forms for Town- owned buildings per request of Planning Dept. for letter of support. S. Makowka felt the Spy Pond Field Bleachers and the Turkey Hill Reservation should be added to the list. D. Baldwin feels that there should be more of a comprehensive package and discussion ensued about how the comprehensive inventory should be prioritized. M. Bush moved that a letter in support with an addendum that at least the 2 properties should be added.

c. S. Makowka just received another CPA application for inventorying Archeological Resources that will including documentation of Millbrook Corridor (the sites, extant artifacts, etc. in corridor that haven't been documented in past), Elizabeth Island, and one or two other properties. J. Worden noted that there are railroad tracks at Russell Place.

M. Bush felt that \$60k was a lot of money and he worried about the financial implications. General concern that the Commissioners did not have an opportunity to review the materials so are not in a position to make an informed decision. The Commission asked S. Makowka to hold off on the new application received today

pending further consideration. To be revisited at next meeting.

d. S. Makowka said he received a request for letter of support for a CPA application for continued elements of restoration work at the Jason Russell House. M. Bush moved approval to write letter, J. Worden seconded, unanimous approval on this letter.

5. OTHER BUSINESS (moved ahead of open forum)

- a. Jason Russell House CPA application -- See above
- b. Central Street and Avon Place Historic District vacant commissioner seats --
No report
- c. Report from Streetscape sub-committee -- *No report*
- d. Modification of Design Guidelines for Fiberglass Gutter eligibility for a CONA --
No report
- e. Update re: Project Monitor Changes. S. Makowka informed Commission that he had reviewed changes approved by project monitor under their discretion. A rear addition on 26A Academy Street was approved in 2017 for a deck with wire railing and discussion back then focused on whether this appropriate in district. C. Barry was appointed monitor. Applicant decided to revise the project and make the addition smaller, making it less impactful on the neighborhood due to its smaller footprint. The result of the change was that there was a smaller 2-story addition with a single flat roof (as opposed to a more complex gable plus flat roof) and no deck. These changes were approved by the monitor. S. Makowka felt the changes were within the scope of the monitor's discretion and was informing the Commission. That hearing is closed and we don't have a second bite at that apple. Per Commission policy, the monitor has responsibility for reviewing whether the proposed alterations are consistent with the original approval. As Chair, he believes that in this case there was no overstepping of the monitor's bounds. He did state that he understands that a neighbor has complained and they will make a statement during Open Forum.

6. OPEN FORUM

Ordinarily, any matter presented to the Commission under Open Forum will neither be acted upon nor a formal decision made, absent a previously noticed agenda item, but the Commission may make a decision if it deems it appropriate and necessary for the public good.

Elizabeth Dellanno, abutter at 24 Academy Street, came to discuss project at 26A Academy Street. The changes to plans concerns them. She understands things change and wishes roofline was similar to what was proposed and she feels the monitor overstepped his authority. They want to know what can be done to remedy the situation. M. Bush said his reaction to the changes are at the margin of monitor authority but he is troubled that there were no communications to the Commission so that the Commissioners could know about the changes. C. Hamilton agreed that it was a big enough change that, in her opinion, it should have been brought back in to give everyone a chance to discuss. E Dellanno stated that the architecture does not match the 1931 center entrance colonial on the outside and it is not what was presented. Discussion that there appears to be piping for an a/c condenser. M. Bush and D. Baldwin asked what recourse can take place. S. Makowka said that the hearing was closed and the monitor did not in his opinion overstep his authority in granting permission for the changes.

- a. Continuation of Formal Hearing re: 12 Elder Terrace (Silverman) for reconstruction of garage (Continued from Original July Request). M. Silverman and C. Royer gave presentation. Proposal is to demolish original garage and put up a new wood frame garage. Proposed to build on footprint of existing garage but to make new garage a few feet longer at the rear. Pg. 2 shows exterior elevations. Propose hip roof to match existing garage across the street in keeping with ones built in that period. Propose to have wood garage overhead door on front and back to get equipment through to rear for landscape work. They would like to paint the door and use the Design 1 style door with the Rec13 window selection as shown on the documentation from RESERVE WOOD collection (shown as Page 37) – 2 banks of 3 panes each, fire rated construction is of concern. Due to location on property line code requires non-flammable material so they are proposing Hardiplank lap siding with smooth side showing and boreal ash material (smooth side) for trim. This latter material is an update in the material specification and is more environmentally friendly and less combustible than PVC which was originally noted. Asphalt shingles to match roof house and porch.
- Aluminum gutters and downspouts with mitered corners as suggested by M. Audin. Gutters on the house are aluminum. On page 2 image 6 is of an existing glassed-in porch where you can see the original siding materials on house – currently clad in asbestos siding over wood clapboard siding. They propose to match that original look for the exterior of the garage. M. Bush said he is slightly surprised there isn't a 'man' door proposed on the garage – architect said you couldn't get it in there with the plans. There was a discussion about the location of the lot line and the possible need to alter plans to pull roofline in 6 inches from current plans. Neighbor behind spoke in support.

M. Bush moved proposal as submitted subject to the condition that if they have to pull eaves in, they need to come back. Seconded for discussion. S. Makowka said we need to note that the use of artificial materials is approved only due to unique, site specific factors and does not represent precedent. M. Bush accepted addition and D. Baldwin seconded. Unanimous approval. Monitor appointed C. Tee.

- b. Continuation of Formal Hearing re: 0 Ravine Street (Perlman) for construction of new house. S. Makowka clarified that the voting members would be: N. Aikenhead, M. Audin, D. Baldwin, C. Barry, M. Bush, C. Tee, J. Worden. S. Makowka noted that pictures of the models were received from the applicant as well as photos from N. Aikenhead and S. Makowka. The updated version of the lot coverage statistics by S. Makowka and K. Lubar were the only new materials.

S. Makowka stated that he felt that the Commission had given the Applicant an indication of alternatives that would potentially be viewed more favorably by the Commission. Applicant attorney J. Leone said they were not authorized to spend any more money and the clients decided to not go forward with any redraw and they want the Commission to consider a number of factors:

- a) The proposed house is appropriate for street with size and mass
- b) At one point in time the barn may or may not have been there and it is speculation based on imprecise maps
- c) Going down Academy Street on the right side there is a little white cape just redone. That's the size house that the neighbors are thinking might go there. He questioned whether the HDC wants a little cape stuck in there – they believe it is not the right style of home. A small house would look odd on the streetscape.

- d) Their position is they want the Commission to take a vote today on the current proposal and go on to Phase 3 discussion of materials so that they can then build a house that the Commission will like. He asked the Commission to accept the fact that this is a relatively in scale to other houses in the neighborhood and neighborhood. It is in the mean of the other houses.

The Commissioners reacted that there is no need to have a small cape on the lot per J. Leone's suggestion. This is a false comparison. M. Audin said a garage is too small and the proposed house is too big. He is concerned that the Applicants are stuck on this house. M. Bush said this lot is suitable for an accessory-like building which creates the impression as the existing garage might once have been. It is easy to imagine that 1 or more of the houses in the immediate vicinity of the lot had an accessory building and that building might have been converted to a dwelling. With that as a foundational narrative bring him an accessory building and he will approve it. C. Barry said there is a major rhythm between major structures and secondary structures and, in this proposal, the major to major relationship is not sympathetic to the existing spacing. C. Hamilton said she agrees with C. Barry. S. Makowka said compared to what was denied a year ago, this current proposal is not any smaller from the perspective of the street. The main part of the house is proposed house is 35 feet with a 2 foot bump out on the 1st floor which is only very slightly smaller. The second floor is actually wider than the previously denied application and the structure is taller. D. Baldwin said the Commission did give a lot of guidance about possible alternatives such as carriage houses in the 22-2500 sf. range. C. Tee said she feels the graciousness of the neighborhood streetscape and feels this would not be an appropriate addition.

J. Worden said one of the reasons they adopted the 3 phase consideration was to first consider whether anything should be built on a lot – consensus, yes, the right thing might be able to be built on the lot; 2nd thing was the massing and before someone goes to expense of window frames, materials, etc. you got some indication of how big a thing can fit on the lot

– he feels that the Commission has been very consistent that the only thing in terms of mass that would be appropriate on this site would be an accessory building; we never asked for plans we said let's consider the massing issue first. We gave you the message that the massing is too much. There are other houses on other lots in other districts that have been approved – in each case we have approved appropriate sized houses but here, the plans have been inconsistent with the rhythm of the street, number of buildings, lot size, etc. and it has been called out in the original district report that this is an important streetscape and in an ideal world it would remain open. If you want to put something, this is a lot that needs a particular type of small house, setback to keep the rhythm of existing large houses on street, with an accessory look to it. M. Bush added that for the record this lot is a little bit unusual and the record reflects that this is a buildable lot and something can be built. M. Audin suggested that the Applicant listen to the feedback from the Commission and the neighbors and learn that they are focused on the spacing while your presentation has been on the building alone.

S. Makowka opened to floor to interested parties. K. Lubar said neighbors are willing to talk but no one has talked with them about what would be appropriate. He submitted a document on what might be appropriate. S. Shaloo went back to the original vote – there was a vote taken and she recalls M. Audin saying now remember something could be built here – though it might be a dog house. S. Shaloo also brought up that houses around this proposed building might be affected if there is blasting done and these are very old structures and the HDC should be careful to protect them.

S.Makowka summarized that he is hearing concerns about streetscape. Building would be incongruous building into streetscape. The visualization and model articulation, especially emphasizes how view of 24 Irving's limited, the subject parcel being part of Hardy compound, and especially, compared to the elongated massing of earlier denied structure, this is now a big and bulkier building. The massing presented to street is as large or larger than previous structure denied. He noted that we haven't gotten to phase 3. M. Bush added that he would like it noted that the applicant has specifically asked for a vote from the HDC at this time.

T. Taketomo stated that this was a bona fide lot by zoning and for owners who owned property prior to a district, there's a level of unfairness of the HDC coming in and taking the value of their property away. Some testimony seems to not be an objective requirement that stands legally to take away the homeowner's property value. He feels there should be some form of compensation from the HDC to the homeowner when they lose value.

M. Bush moved that having reviewed the evidence presented, the Commission has determined that the proposed structure would be incongruous with the purposes of the District for the following reasons:

- 1) The District Study establishing the District specifically emphasizes this portion of Ravine and Irving Streets as being perhaps the best preserved streetscape offering a compelling panorama of architectural style and history
- 2) The proposed building would be an incongruous intrusion into this noted streetscape.
 - a) First, it breaks up the historical spacing of the buildings in the immediate area, namely Ravine and Irving Streets which we determine to be the most relevant setting within which to judge this proposal
 - i.) Evidence in the record establishes combined side setbacks between structures in this area are smaller than many other properties in the area.
 - ii.) The house's coverage of its lot is higher than the surrounding houses in the relevant area.
 - b) Second, the proposed building would substantially block the currently existing Ravine Street view of a significant District resource (24 Irving Street) which has historically been experienced from this perspective.
 - c) Third, the Commissioners have consistently requested that the applicant explore a smaller structure that could fit more harmoniously into the setting. We found the Applicants' position that they have addressed this concern by reducing the size relative to structures previously proposed for the site to be unpersuasive. The maximum width of the house is only slightly narrower on the first floor and the street facing massing is actually greater on the second floor.

Motion seconded for discussion. It was suggested that the following language be added to the motion:

- 3) Finally, we note that there may be issues related to the style and finishes of the

structure. This denial is based on the review of the siting and massing of the structure alone and a finding that it is inappropriate on those grounds. At this point, we have heard no evidence nor made any determination about the appropriateness of other factors such as the visible style and finishes of the proposed house.

M. Bush amended his motion to include proposed language. Revised motion seconded.

Roll call vote on motion to deny application at end of Phase II: M. Audin-yes to deny, C. Barry – yes, D. Baldwin-yes, N. Aikenhead - yes, C. Tee – yes, M. Bush - yes, J. Worden- yes. Unanimous vote to deny by all seven Commissioners.

- c. Continuation of Formal Hearing re: 21-23 Russell for driveway changes. J. Nyberg gave presentation on need for safe parking on property. Driveway to take cars off the street proposal received lots of input. At back of property the abutters to right (11 and 17 Russell Terrace) have a back alley that goes into the back corner of the property. They asked the neighbors at 17 about access for construction and that didn't work for them so they came to ask permission from Commission. Letters were sent inquiring about access for residents and they did hear from 11 Russell Terrace that they were open to the idea and were willing to talk with them. 17 Russell Terrace has not responded to letters, door knocking, or emails. Guessing it doesn't work for them. So they are assuming that the street access won't work. Existing retaining wall aligns with the neighbors' wall. Original parking was partially on that area. Proposal is to construct retaining wall (3 walls) – rear wall lines up with back of house and it is all level with the street. Approximately 38' is from the sidewalk to the back of the parking area and it will be 20' wide. Proposing 4 car tandem parking. The suggested clapboard finish to match house but Commissioners felt that would be incongruous and this structure needed to be stone (or clad with appropriate stone). J. Worden said the wall and down to grade on the back ought to be at least clad in stone. Foundation of house is fieldstone and front wall is granite – M. Bush said he thinks it should be sympathetic to the foundation on the rear of the house. S. McCabe an abutter said this is a vastly improved plan – she wondered in materials for the parking area – porous materials that will address drainage issues and minimize the radiant heat that comes off more asphalt. M. Bush said the concrete hexagons that you plant grass in might be an option. Discussion about view of the rear – this is visible from Prescott Street so it is under our jurisdiction. Neighbor M. Wilke said they are very happy about this design and likes the idea of storage in the proposed structure.

Applicant agreed to continue hearing to next month.

- d. Formal Hearing re: 20 Russell Street (Martin) for solar panel installation. B. Melofchik announced that she would be recording the meeting. She gave presentation on solar panel installation – She gave aerial view of the house – 12 panels which will be all together on the roof, not as shown on the photo submitted. All panels will be continuous with no spacing and proposed panels are actually black on black with the black back sheet. 12 Solar Panels on western side and conduit will be more or less on the centered dormer. C. Barry said it would be nice for the conduit to be grouped with the downspouts and painted to blend in with the house. M. Audin also suggested that the conduit should penetrate through the eave rather than extending out around gutter. Neighbors expressed support for the proposal.

J. Worden moved approval of project as submitted subject to the conditions that

conduit goes through soffit and parallels the existing downspout and that panels will be continuous and black on black. Seconded by D. Baldwin. Unanimous approval. Monitor appointed D. Baldwin

- e. Informal Hearing re: 138 Westminster Ave. (McPhail) for siding, windows and an addition. K. McPhail gave presentation regarding changes including addition on back of house and alteration of front porch by moving front wall forward about 3 feet. 1 additional window will be on the front porch. Hoping to replace vinyl siding – discussed Hardiplank and were told that wouldn't fly on this property. The existing gutters are aluminum and (non-original) windows are vinyl. The Commission said that you can replace existing windows with vinyl by right but strongly suggested that they consider replacing with wood instead of vinyl.
 - f. Informal Hearing re: 17 Irving Street (Parmenter School Bldg.) for installation of an elevator. Proposing to put an elevator in inside the building. The overrun of the elevator will extend above the roofline as shown on plans. Will be clad in same material as existing chimneys or projections coming through the roof line. Main entry needs to be graded from the public way in concrete and door frame.
 - g. Informal Hearing re: 40 Irving Street (Green) for roof and roofline changes. D. Green brought photos showing the existing flashing in various heights at the roofline. Metal trim flashing that goes into the gutter and on 2nd floor 2 levels of metal flashing. Proposal by roofer for trim boards and under flashing he found the trim boards. The trim board materials
 - M. Bush suggested Boral material for the trim board. More durable, doesn't have the expansion problems of PVC and not as costly as cedar. D. Green stated that he is going to remove and replace existing wood materials with wood materials and submit an application for a CONA.
8. REVIEW OF PROJECTS
9. MEETING ADJOURNS 11:45pm
10. NEXT MEETING: Thursday, December 19, 2019 (1 week early due to holidays) December Reviewing Commissioner: C. Hamilton